

Chapter 1

Introduction

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1.1 Linguistics and Argumentation

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¹ARGAGE 2015, www.unil.ch/argage2015.

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While much has been said on the argumentative dimension of natural language (see (iii) below), there is to our knowledge no book-length study exclusively devoted to the various relationships between argumentation and language at a discursive level concerned with argumentative articulations between propositions (with perhaps the notable exception of Doury's most recent textbook (2016), which is strongly linguistically-oriented).

Available research dealing with the relationship between argumentation and linguistics typically falls in one of the three following categories:

- (i) a **descriptive** perspective, which tackles the question of the kinds of linguistic resources speakers use in argumentation, and which has a strong and clear typological import. Studies adopting this perspective usually consist in an investigation of the linguistic means, in terms of verbal (i.e., syntactic, semantic and pragmatic) material that speakers draw on to perform argumentation in communicative settings. Research in this area typically strives to work out functional classifications of the types of linguistic resources that may be used to perform a range of argumentative moves (see, e.g., the pragma-dialectical study of argumentative indicators in critical discussions, Van Eemeren et al. (2007), the special issue of *Verbum* edited by Marianne Doury (2010), and/or the work by Micheli (2012), for an overview of the issues involved in the discussion). These approaches accordingly aim to pair linguistic formulations with argumentative functions as they elaborate linguistically-informed functional inventories.
- (ii) an **explanatory** perspective, which has to do with how language can be used to fulfil the perlocutionary goals of argumentation, among which persuasive goals. Research in the fields of social psychology (see O'Keefe (2002) for an overview), rhetoric and argumentation (see e.g., the classical study of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958); Doury (2016) for the rhetorical role of linguistic markers of argumentation, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1996, 2002) for links between rhetoric and pragmatics, and Herman and Oswald (2014) for explorations at the rhetoric-cognition interface) has to some extent been concerned with the instrumental relationship between language and the effects of argumentation, and yet, a truly linguistically-grounded account remains to be elaborated, even if it should be recognised that the field is starting to grow, notably through the impulse of an interdisciplinary turn taken in argumentation studies over the past 15–20 years.
- (iii) a **semantic** perspective, which is perhaps more clearly rooted in a linguistic approach than the others. This perspective, initiated by French linguist Oswald Ducrot [see e.g. Ducrot et al. (1980), Anscombe and Ducrot (1983)], construes the relationship between argumentation and language as a necessary one: under this approach, the linguistic system is semantically taken to incorporate an argumentative direction, in the sense that linguistic

units are deemed to carry intrinsic argumentative orientations (see below, Sect. 1.2 on language markers of argumentation). Nevertheless, although directly concerned with the relationship between argumentation and language, the object of study of this approach is far too *micro* to cover the range of argumentative phenomena that extend over to the propositional and discursive level, let alone at the speech act level, which are the characteristic levels on which the analysis of argumentative practices is carried out.

From this brief overview of the different types of relationships holding between argumentation and language, as they have been discussed in the literature, it appears that while the linguistic dimension of argumentation is often recognised and described as playing a crucial role in the nature, shaping and outcome of argumentative practices, little work has been specifically and systematically devoted to precisely identifying the exact nature and variety of these relationships. As a consequence, a systematic study of those aspects of argumentation that crucially rely on specific linguistic patterns remains to be conducted. In particular, we believe that a focused and systematic investigation of the extent to which language (including mechanisms of linguistic comprehension) may contribute to a thorough investigation of the three perspectives detailed above is still lacking.

This volume is therefore meant to provide an original and dedicated contribution on these relationships through a collection of chapters that have been selected on the basis of their ability to approach one or more of the perspectives detailed above on the relationship between argumentation and language. In particular, we have gathered contributions which focus on either of (or combine two of) the three following dimensions: (i) properly linguistic aspects of argumentation, (ii) discursive aspects of argumentation or, (iii) cognitive underpinnings of argumentation.

It is furthermore important to state in preamble that the collection of contributions offered here is not meant to be exhaustive, as the topics and phenomena tackled by our authors do not exhaust the range of research questions that are relevant to an investigation of the relationships between argumentation and language. Argumentative practices are typically verbal practices,² and as such they rely on linguistic systems as their medium. This, in principle, legitimates reliance on linguistic approaches and this collective volume is meant to illustrate how such investigations might be fruitfully conducted, with no pretension to covering the complete range of relevant linguistic issues to be dealt with in argumentation studies.

We now turn to a more detailed summary of the state of research within these dimensions, relatively to the study of argumentative practices, in order to present the background against which the contributions of this volume operate in their investigation of linguistic aspects of argumentation.

²Of course, this does not downplay the importance of multimodal argumentation.

1.2 Linguistic Markers of Argumentation

One of the clearest attempts to systematically examine the link between argumentation and language is probably the French-speaking approach to argumentation (*L'argumentation dans la langue*—Argumentation-within-language theory). This approach can be distinguished from mainstream contemporary approaches to argumentation, such as the informal logic tradition or pragma-dialectics, on at least two levels. First, at the epistemological level, argumentation is mainly and nearly exclusively grasped through the description of empirical texts or dialogs. Second, and precisely at this descriptive level, linguistic markers constitute the main entry point to the study of argumentation.

In terms of linguistic material of interest, this approach has mainly studied on the one hand enunciative and utterer-centred phenomena (which we will not elaborate on here) and, on the other hand, indicators of argument. The latter, marked by “words of discourse” (*mots de discours*, i.e. discourse markers), such as “but”, “nevertheless” or “even if”, are accounted for through a fine-grained observation of the behaviour of their semantics within different contexts. Such an attention to argumentative indicators is probably due to the considerable influence of the following two publications: “*Car, parce que et puisque*” (1975, groupe lambda-1) and Jean-Claude Anscombe and Oswald Ducrot’s work on the connective “but” (1977).

Work on linguistic markers overall falls into two general categories: language markers producing actual or potential forms of argumentation—the so-called “Argumentation-within-language” theory and its successors—and language markers indicating or revealing argumentative movements. In other words, in the first case, the linguistic markers semantically express an argumentative relationship between words, while they help shaping an argumentation process in the second case.

1.2.1 *Argumentative Orientations and Argumentation-Within-Language*

In the first category, argumentation must be related to the orientation given by the lexicon. “John hasn’t worked much” (“*peu*” in French) and “John has worked a little bit” (“*un peu*” in French) both contain an argumentative orientation that restricts the choice of sequences or conclusions that can be drawn from such a statement: whereas “John hasn’t worked much” points towards “John will fail”, “John has worked a little bit” is oriented towards a statement that predicts success. The connection to reality is indifferent here: the quantity of work can be perfectly identical for both utterances. In this approach, it is therefore the linguistic form of utterances that determines the argument, hence the idea expressed by Anscombe and Ducrot that the signification of an utterance lies in its orientation (“*signifier, pour un énoncé, c’est orienter*” (1983: foreword)).

This theory has paved the way for many works on argumentative connectors, notably on their instructional dimensions, which have been examined in detail: see for example Anscombe and Ducrot (1983), Ducrot (1984), Ducrot et al. (1980). The case of “*mais*” (“but”) illustrates the core of this theory: the two statements “this restaurant is good *but* expensive” and “this restaurant is expensive *but* good” lead to opposite conclusions (the latter conveys an incentive to go, the former an incentive *not* to go), even if the linguistic material used is identical in both cases: two adjectives to qualify the same eating place. There is still an important tradition of research on discursive operators (Anscombe 2013) such as “at least”, “especially” or “since”, etc.

It is important to underline that, contrary to classical approaches to argumentation, such works consider neither the question of reasoning and its validity nor the question of the relation of argumentation to truth. This is a strictly semantic (and not pragmatic), ascriptivist (and not descriptivist) and structuralist theory. In such a theoretical approach, it is impossible to involve contextual, situational, or encyclopaedic knowledge outside of what the language tells us about itself.

Several theories emerged from this line of thought: Carel and Ducrot’s theory of semantic blocks (Carel 1994; Carel and Ducrot 1999a, b; Carel 2011), Anscombe’s stereotype theory (2001a, b), Galatanu’s theory of argumentative possibilities (1999, 2007, 2009) and Raccah’s viewpoint semantics (2001, 2005a, b). Beyond their differences, even their divergences, the fundamental common point is a form of generalised radical argumentativism, i.e., the idea that argumentation is intrinsic to language. In order to illustrate this idea, let us take one of Ducrot and Carel’s examples: “You are driving too fast: we are going to have an accident”. For them, there is no link or premise that adds something between the datum and its claim, contrary to intuition. The mere fact of articulating “too + adjective” already leads us to consider a harmful or negative conclusion. In short, the conclusion is already included in the argument—“the very meaning of A is determined by that of C, and vice versa” (Ducrot 1993: 242, our translation). It is therefore an illusion or a deception, according to this theory, to declare that the first part of this utterance justifies the second. It follows that every utterance, even every word, can be described semantically by argumentative blocks.³

This theory, beyond its obvious linguistic interest, highlights the logical illusion according to which in any argumentative process there would first be data collection, that would be transparently translated into language, followed, with the help of a warrant or a major premise, by a mechanic percolation to a conclusion which we were supposed to ignore at the beginning of the process. In fact, for them the words selected to express the data already orient the conclusion; on this account, to say

³For example, the word “danger” is described by two semantic blocks: a “normative” block which is articulated with THEREFORE: “danger THEREFORE careful”, but also a “transgressive” block which is articulated with NEVERTHELESS “danger NEVERTHELESS not careful”.

“Peter is courageous” or “Peter is bold” is not a description of reality, but a way to argue about Peter.

Jean-Claude Anscombe uses another way to illustrate how language carries already-shared standpoints, or ideologies. He incorporates in a theory of language the stereotypes of a linguistic community (following Putnam 1975). Anscombe notices that the sentence “Cheetah is a monkey, but it dislikes bananas” is unproblematic whereas “Cheetah is a monkey; therefore it dislikes bananas” seems quite strange. Yet, no dictionary defines monkeys with the help of any “banana-liking” criterion. Therefore, language has associated, through its evolution and use, a set of stereotypes to words: these stereotypes are not written in a dictionary but remain an important part of the meaning of these words, namely the word “monkey” is associated to the fact (or belief) that they generally like bananas (Anscombe 2001a). The stabilization of stereotypes within a linguistic community involves the incorporation of some beliefs into a language, independently of contextual parameters. As such, this theory reveals some implicit beliefs supported by a linguistic community. The test of developing an utterance with “but” and with “therefore” is often quite indicative of such stereotypes. For example, “James is a populist, but I like him” is quite standard while “James is a populist; therefore, I like him” or “James is a populist, but I don’t like him” seem strange to us, in our present linguistic community. As a consequence, what we have here is a stereotype, namely “populists are not liked”, which is now associated to the lexical meaning of *populist*. That explains why “James is a populist” may be sometimes rather considered as an insult than as a fact.

Theoretical accounts of argumentation-within-language bring our attention to the actual or potential articulations of linguistic chains. They urge us to be vigilant towards the potential orientations of language used in an utterance and they highlight how the implicit, collective and manifestly obvious beliefs of a linguistic community are embedded in words and in utterance chains.

1.2.2 *Markers of Argumentative Relationships*

The works mentioned in Sect. 1.2.1, which are underlain by a specifically linguistic approach, seem to somewhat alter traditional definitions of argumentation. If we consider that argumentation is a “specific and verbal mode of treatment of a disagreement, which consists in the construction of solid standpoints that are supported by textual justificatory work and situated by an interactional and dialogical work of positioning” (Jacquin and Micheli 2012, our translation), we realise that Argumentation-within-language theory is not concerned with disagreements, standpoints or interaction, simply because the context of communication is external to its epistemological and strictly linguistic frame. In this respect, Ducrot has even proposed a distinction between linguistic argumentation and rhetorical argumentation (2004) to avoid the confusion between these two radically different views on argumentation.

In the French-speaking community of scholars, the tendency to consider that nearly any utterance can be considered as argumentative is rather strong: like previous theories, the work of Vignaux (1988) and that of Jean-Blaise Grize on natural logic (1996), as well as a part of Ruth Amossy's work on "the argumentative dimension" of discourse (2005) all broaden the spectrum of argumentation beyond classical linguistic markers. For these authors, the discursive choices of speakers as well as the "ways of seeing the world" that are conveyed by the latter are likely to influence the addressee, by making him/her change his/her point of view on depicted realities. In this respect, discourse *is* argumentation as far as discourse is intended to produce some effects on other people's minds or beliefs. Grize's natural logic, in particular, uses the notion of schematization to account for the idea that realities are subjectively shaped by a speaker for an addressee. Under this view, each utterance can be considered as argumentation, since it invites the addressee to accept such a schematization or to adopt the expressed points of view. In sum, the non-neutral use of language (a) in a certain context (b) using discourse entities, which are considered as signs or images of cognitive representations (c) invites an addressee to never consider data as given fact: in this sense, language can be thought to be argumentative by default. The three thematic dimensions explored in Lausanne during the first edition of the ARGAGE conference series in 2015, namely linguistic markers (a), discursive strategies (b) and cognitive processes (c), can accordingly be seen as both a follow-up and a reflection of Grize's influence in French argumentation studies.

Considering that argumentation is a specific mode of treatment of discourse that is different from other language activities such as description or storytelling, many scholars, while relying on results of Argumentation-within-language theory, endorse such a broadened vision of argumentation. Within this field, we can mention Marianne Doury's work, on, for example, the meta-discursive linguistic markers which are used to comment on argumentative moves, such as the accusation of *amalgam* (2005). Doury adopts a descriptive approach to argumentative norms and, like Christian Plantin, is interested in linguistic markers that reveal argumentative schemes. For example, "precisely" ("*justement*") can be described as a marker that reverses the proposed premise and in fact turns it into an argument for an opposite claim: "Mary does not want to go out: she is a bit depressed" can be followed by "Precisely! Going out will change her ideas" (see Plantin 2016, 420). Yet, for these scholars, connectives are not considered as the focal point of the study of argumentation. Plantin incidentally insists on the fact that connectives are multifunctional: "there are non-argumentative uses of 'because' or 'therefore' and there are arguments without 'because' and 'therefore'" (2016: 376, see also Moeschler's contribution to this volume).

Such a stance on argumentative indicators can equally be found in the work of pragma-dialecticians, especially after the standard dialectical model was extended to include a rhetorical component with the notion of "strategic maneuvering" (see Van Eemeren 2010 for a complete account). Under this view, research at the linguistics-argumentation interface pushes a fundamentally descriptive agenda which calls for a systematic investigation of the correspondences between

argumentative moves and the linguistic resources speakers draw on to realise them. Strategic maneuvering can be seen as essentially concerned with the linguistic choices that allow speakers to maneuver in their quest for rhetorically effective argumentative moves:

In the view we developed, strategic maneuvering can take place in making an expedient choice from the options constituting the ‘topical potential’ associated with a particular discussion stage, in selecting a responsive adaptation to ‘audience demand,’ and *in exploiting the appropriate ‘presentational devices.* (Van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002: 139, emphasis added)

In this framework, the role of argumentative indicators in discourse (see Van Eemeren et al. 2007) constitutes a privileged entry point for linguistic insights in the study of argumentation. In this endeavour, pragma-dialectical investigations have constituted a driving force in the Anglophone community: exemplary works are Snoeck Henkemans’ research on rhetorical questions (2009a) and on *praeteritio* (2009b) (see also Lewiński’s and Mohammed’s contributions to this volume).

Summing up, there are two main ways of approaching the properly linguistic dimension of argumentation in the literature: either language is to be seen as intrinsically argumentative (cf. Ducrot’s perspective) or as facilitating argumentative articulations between discourse components—and this includes a meta-level where speakers talk about and comment on their verbal argumentative performance. This level could be qualified as more discursive than linguistic, since it is chiefly concerned with the argumentative relationships that hold between discourse segments—or speech acts. It is thus precisely to the discursive dimension of argumentative practices that we now turn to.

1.3 Discursive Processes

Although it is anchored by linguistic markers and underlain by cognitive operations, argumentation can also more generally be tackled as a specific human activity. By the word *actio*, Classical Rhetoric highlights the fact that argumentation is a *performance* accomplished in *context* (i.e., it is *indexical*). Context here can have various meanings, each of them being relevant for the study of argumentation as a discourse process.

1.3.1 Context as Verbal Context

In context, words are not only selected but also *temporally* combined together to form an oral or written text, whether it is monological or dialogal. Words contribute to meaning through their respective *cotextual* relationships (e.g. Adam 2011; Halliday and Hasan 1976). From that perspective, argumentative moves can be

analysed as textual sequences, i.e. as “a constellation of propositions intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint” (Van Eemeren et al. 1996, p. 5). Argumentation, as a specific cotextual relationship between propositions, can be analysed at two different levels, echoing what classical Rhetoric calls *inventio* and *dispositio* respectively: *argumentation schemes* and *argumentation structures*. While argumentation schemes are typical inferential patterns which allow us to draw the conclusion from the argument (e.g. argumentation from example, from consequences; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958; Walton et al. 2008), argumentation structures refer to the ways argumentative moves are tied together to form an argumentative text supporting a standpoint (i.e. linked, convergent, or serial argumentation; e.g. Freeman 1991; Henkemans 2000).

Verbal context also encompasses the relationships among the different positions sequentially defended in the argumentative situation by co-present and respectively addressed arguers as well as among a position and intertextual allusions to positions and ideologies that are not defended in situ but pointed at by specific dialogic or polyphonic markers such as reported speech, negations, or concessions (Doury 2012; Hirsch 1989; Jacobs and Jackson 1982; Jacquin 2014).

1.3.2 Context as Semiotic Context

In context, words are not only selected and temporally combined to form (constellations of) propositions but they can also be *simultaneously* associated with other semiotic resources. The last decades have seen the emergence of a *multimodal* perspective on argumentation, i.e. a perspective that looks at the many situations where argumentative communication is performed by combining at least two “modes”.⁴ For instance, *visual argumentation* calls for the study of the combination of linguistic markers and choices of colour, layout, font, fixed or moving picture (Birdsell and Groarke 1996; Kjeldsen 2015), while *argumentative talk-in-interaction* questions the role of embodied conducts, such as gestures, postures, and gaze direction (Jacquin 2014; Poggi et al. 2013; Vincze 2010).

1.3.3 Context as Speech Context

In context, words make sense in the speech situation where they are used. As discussed by Bitzer (1968), the “*rhetorical situation*” consists of (i) an “exigence”, which is the topic, question, or issue framed and addressed by the arguer; (ii) an

⁴“Mode is a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning. *Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack* are examples of modes used in representation and communication” (Kress 2009, p. 54).

“audience”, which highlights the importance of what sociolinguistics and communication theorists call “audience-design” (Bell 1984; Clark and Carlson 1982) or, more generally, “recipient-design” (Sacks et al. 1974)⁵; and (iii) some “constraints”, which are the different elements that have (or can have) an influence on the way the “exigence” is tackled. Those constraints can be the types of resources that are available (e.g. the “modes” described above), but also some more diffuse, socio-cultural norms (e.g. the “rules for a critical discussion” identified and discussed by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, Chap. 6). Constraints also concern more specific discursive and interactional features, whose importance justifies the creation of a separate and last subsection, defined as follows.

1.3.4 Context as Type of Activity or Discourse Genre

In context, words are produced and interpreted in “activity types” (Levinson 1992) or discourse “genres” (Bhatia 1993; Swales 1990), that specify the three, fundamental or prototypical genres identified by classical Rhetoric (i.e. deliberative, judicial, epideictic). It is now well admitted that argumentation is not performed the same way in public, on TV, in parliamentary debates, in dispute mediations, in news rooms or in published editorials, in financial or medical communication (e.g. Van Eemeren and Garssen 2012; Van Eemeren 2009), etc. This variety of usage questions the roles of the participants (i.e. Proponent, Opponent, Third Party), the organization of speakership (“participation framework” in Goffman’s (1981) terms), and the goals of the argumentative moves: while some genres are oriented towards persuasion (i.e. to persuade the addressee), others are only structured by the two fundamental operations of justification and positioning (Angenot 2008).

To summarise, tackling argumentation as a *discursive process* calls for an analysis of argumentative moves in context, taken at the same time as the *local or global verbal context* coming before and after the moves, the *semiotic context* surrounding the moves, the *speech context* anchoring the moves and the *generic context* constraining or influencing the production and interpretation of moves. The present volume gives examples of such a *holistic* perspective on argumentation as a human activity (see in particular Mohammed’s, Macagno and Bigi’s and Mundwiler and Kreuz’s contributions to this volume for accounts which emphasise the influence of macro-contexts on argumentative performance).

⁵A typical relevant phenomenon to be considered is tension and differences between argumentation as being addressed to a specific audience vs. to a universal audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958).

1.4 Cognitive Operations

1.4.1 *Argumentation and Cognition*

Argumentation has, over the years, traditionally been defined and studied as a social and discursive activity (see e.g. Van Eemeren et al. 2014; Lewiński and Mohammed 2016). More recently, however, a growing body of research has started to focus on the fact that at least part of the argumentative process takes place in the arguers' minds and is accordingly attempting to elucidate the cognitive underpinnings of this particular communicative practice (see e.g. Mercier and Sperber 2009, 2011, 2017; Hahn and Hornikx 2016; Corner et al. 2011; Lillo-Unglaube et al. 2014; Oswald 2016a among others). Under this perspective, arguments can be seen as the verbal formulation of (cognitive) inferences which articulate various kinds of justificatory relationships.

This relatively recent cognitive trend in argumentation studies has emerged on the back of the growing influence of neighbouring disciplines such as the psychology of reasoning (Wason 1960, 1966; Evans and Frankish 2009) and the study of cognitive heuristics (Tversky and Kahneman 1974; Gigerenzer 2004, 2008). Some argumentation theorists have nowadays begun to integrate these insights in a number of ways (see Walton 2010; Jackson 1996; Oswald and Lewiński 2014; Herman and Oswald 2014), according to their ability to shed light on some fundamental questions at the core of the study of argumentation, among which argument quality, norms of argumentative acceptability, argumentative effectiveness and persuasiveness. An overarching concern in this line of inquiry thus relates to argument processing, the idea being that knowing more about the cognitive underpinnings of argument production and evaluation is likely to further our knowledge of human argumentative practices.

1.4.2 *Cognitive Operations Involved in Argumentation*

What, in our view, cognitive science specifically has to offer to the study of argumentation is to be found in the key concepts of representation and inference. As mentioned above, behind every actual argumentation there is at least one argumentative inference, which can be broadly be identified as a set of representations articulated in such a way that one subset of these serves as evidence for another: in this sense, the premises and the conclusions of natural argumentations may be construed as representations taking part in a justificatory cognitive operation. The specificity of each argumentative inference is then to be found in the type of support offered in this operation, which is likely to vary along the specificity of the argumentative scheme under scrutiny (see Walton et al. 2008).

Focusing on its cognitive dimension, it therefore becomes possible to construe argumentation, even if only atomically from a reductionist standpoint, as a type of

justificatory articulation between representations. Crucially, argumentative inference so construed builds on other cognitive mechanisms, notably those which are responsible for generating interpretations of communicative stimuli and in particular verbal stimuli: in order to evaluate whether some conclusion follows from the premises presented to support it, one first needs to understand—that is, to have a representation taken to be contextually accurate—of the content of both premises and conclusion (see also Mercier and Sperber 2009, 2011). Quite straightforwardly, then, what one *understands* from someone's argumentation is in principle likely to play a constraining role in its evaluation: for instance, lexical operations as basic as simple reference assignment may orient argumentative evaluation by playing on positive or negative connotations, themselves likely to generate biased representations (see Oswald 2011 for a discussion).

With this in mind, cognitive mechanisms of utterance interpretation become a relevant phenomenon to look at when we push forward a cognitive agenda in argumentation studies. In particular, given the linguistic richness on which argumentative processes might draw to verbalise their constitutive inferences, it becomes relevant to try to assess from a cognitive perspective the constraining role specific linguistic structures or expressions may play when used argumentatively. This in turn expresses the need to enrich existing accounts of argumentation with cognitive pragmatic insights on the representation of meaning in natural language.

In this spirit, part of the motivation of this volume rests on an exploration of the role linguistic material may have on the representation of communicated information, which serves as the input for argument processing by the recipients of argumentative discourse. This is why we consider that input from linguistics and in particular from the linguistic disciplines devoted to the study of meaning (i.e. semantics and pragmatics) is crucial for a cognitive approach to argumentation. If specific formulations are likely to yield specific representations which would vary should the formulation vary as well, and since processing an argument requires the representation of the contents of the premises and the conclusion, then in principle specific formulations are likely to influence the outcome of argumentative processing.

This is significant for the study of argumentation from at least two perspectives, namely a methodological and an explanatory perspective. From a methodological perspective, the study of the cognitive mechanisms involved in the interpretation of speaker meaning are of capital importance to the analysis of argumentation in tasks of argumentative reconstruction, particularly when speakers leave parts of their argumentative contribution implicit (see Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004; Oswald 2016b; Gerritsen 2001), as such models will help in the task of identifying (implicit) speaker meaning. From an explanatory perspective devoted to the study of rhetorical effectiveness, a cognitive inquiry may illuminate the conditions under which the information contained in the premises of the argumentation offered by the speaker is likely to constrain its evaluation. In this strand of research, successful argumentation (be it fallacious or not) can be assessed as the result of a specific form of interaction between competing sets of information, namely the conclusion, its premises and the critical information required to assess the link between the latter. Other things being equal, when critical information is more salient (which, in

cognitive terms, can be assessed in terms of ease of processing and epistemic strength), chances are that the argument will not manage to convince; in the alternative scenario, and other things being equal, when premises are more salient (more accessible and epistemically stronger), the conclusion is likely to go through (see Oswald 2016a). As these sets of information are represented on the basis of communicative and verbal stimuli, it therefore makes sense to scrutinise the impact of verbal material on the representations that partake in argumentative processes.

While this volume cannot tackle all three dimensions in detail, its contributions do offer insights on the cognitive machinery which connects the linguistic dimension of argumentation with the discursive nature of argumentation and its typical effects, usually defined in terms of rhetorical effectiveness or persuasiveness (see in particular Saussure's, Ervas et al.'s, Herman's and Moeschler's contributions to the volume).

1.5 Overview of the Contributions to the Volume

The volume is divided in two parts. We have opted for this structure based on a thematic criterion related to the communicative level on which each contribution focuses. The first part, titled *Linguistic Resources of Argumentation*, gathers contributions whose main focus is the exploration of linguistic phenomena and their role in argumentative practices. In other words, part I of the volume is devoted to the specifically linguistic dimension at play in argumentative practices. The second part, as indicated by its title (*Argumentative Processes: Cognition and Discourse*), focuses on the cognitive and the discursive dimensions of argumentation, therefore abstracting away from specific linguistic phenomena.

In Chap. 2, Thierry Herman develops a linguistically-informed revision of Toulmin's famous *layout of argument*. Focusing on the nature and role of the various components of this layout based on their linguistic anchoring and potential formulations, Herman extends Toulmin's original proposal and offers a careful reflexion meant to both ground and expand the inherently dialectical nature of argumentation. Through the development of the model of the argumentative cell, Herman is thus able to account for different possibilities of counter-discourse integration as well as to refine classical notions such as Backing and Data, while considering the fundamental (and often overlooked) role of evidentiality in Toulmin's layout. His work, at the precise interface between language, discourse and cognition, carries obvious descriptive and explanatory advantages, as it covers issues that are at the core of rhetorical inquiry: Herman offers indeed a fine-grained description of argumentative structures and at the same time provides an account of why the latter can be rhetorically appealing in cognitive processing terms.

In Chap. 3, Maarten Van Leeuwen combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a case study of *complementation* in political discourse, devoted to the discourse of Dutch populist Geert Wilders over the years. The goal of his contribution is to show how the use of a very specific grammatical phenomenon, namely complementation (defined as a pair of subordinated subject and object

clauses which usually involves a source of information), can diachronically be traced in political discourse and to describe the implications of documented changes in rhetorical terms. Complementation is a syntactic structure that typically invites alternative perspectives to be voiced, since it explicitly mentions the source X of the propositional content P embedded in the subordinate clause (e.g., ‘X said/considers/believes that P’)—thereby leaving room to wonder about and possibly express other sources of opinion on P. In his analysis, Van Leeuwen observes a drop in the use of complementation in Wilders’ discourse over the years and discusses its implications in terms of *ethos* management and disagreement space (which is *ipso facto* narrowed down, since the absence of complementation leaves less room for opponents to chip in). In doing so, Van Leeuwen convincingly demonstrates how the study of grammatical phenomena can shed light on argumentative practices, here by documenting how argumentatively self-sealing strategies with strong rhetorical implications can be realised through grammatical means.

Chapter 4, by Joanna Miecznikowski, is a vivid illustration of how linguistic insights can be used in the study of argumentative relations. Focusing on Italian appearance verbs (*rivelare*, to reveal and *emergere*, to emerge), Miecznikowski shows how evidential expressions can function as argumentative indicators. Drawing both on the *Argumentum Model of Topics* (for its ability to represent inferential articulations) and on linguistic research on evidentiality, Miecznikowski performs a corpus-based analysis in which she demonstrates how evidential verbs fulfil their argumentative role in the absence of clear argumentative formats. Her claim rests on the following argument: since evidentials have to do with sources of evidence and more generally information, and since sources of evidence can be evaluated as reliable or unreliable (i.e., sources of evidence are controvertible), evidential expressions can be taken to perform justificatory work in what could be considered as implicit argumentation. As such, evidentials such as *rivelare* and *emergere* signal that the speaker is performing inferences to support the propositional content she is putting forward, which is a clear indication that their use is instructional in terms of an argumentative perspective.

Elena Musi, in Chap. 5, adds to this specific discussion on the relationship between evidential expressions and argumentation by focusing on the use of another evidential, Italian *sembrare* (to seem), in a corpus of opinion articles. Drawing as well on the *Argumentum Model of Topics*, Musi considers how the use of *sembrare* relates to (i) types of expressible standpoints and (ii) types of defeasible argument schemes. The whole rationale of her investigation is thus an exploration of the strong relationship between linguistic resources (here evidentiality) and the structure and nature of argumentation these resources license. Her findings suggest that the semantic properties of evidentials impose restrictions on the type of argument schemes that may be used (here argument schemes from whole to parts and causal argumentation are specifically considered). Moreover, the type of investigation presented by Musi allows for a high degree of precision in the description of the argumentative work performed by evidential expressions, as her methodology is able to determine which components of the inference (*endoxon*,

datum, *maxim*, *locus*, etc.) are involved in the argumentative possibilities offered by the evidential expression.

Chapter 6, by Jacques Moeschler, concludes the first part on the linguistic resources of argumentation. In this chapter, Moeschler adopts a genuine linguistic pragmatic perspective to consider the difference between argumentative sequences marked by connectives and those that dispose of them, with the use of French *mais* ('but') as a case in point. This chapter is perhaps closer in scope and spirit to the type of work carried out within French Argumentation-within-language approaches (though Moeschler clearly demarcates his approach from the latter), as it considers the building blocks of argumentation in discourse, namely connectives. Moeschler offers a very fine-grained description of the features of *mais* which also accounts for why certain usages are licensed while some others are not. Couched in a relevance-theoretical cognitive pragmatic framework (Sperber and Wilson 1995; Wilson and Sperber 2012), his analysis submits that the presence of connectives in discourses makes them more efficient (they minimise processing effort and maximise relevance) and stronger, as connectives introduce new focal information which carry more contextual implications than non-focal information.

The second part of the volume (*Argumentative processes: cognition and discourse*) scopes over the discursive and cognitive dimensions of argumentative practices; the contributions gathered therein, however, are also rooted in broadly linguistic perspectives which decisively incorporate issues of *meaning construction*.

In Chap. 7, Francesca Ervas, Elisabetta Gola and Maria Grazia Rossi examine the cognitive aspects involved in the processing of analogical varieties of the fallacy of *quaternio terminorum* (an erroneous syllogism involving four terms instead of three), in cases where the ambiguity of the middle term rests on the use of a metaphor. The authors present an experimental design which shows, contrary to mainstream Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), that the nature of the metaphor (lexicalised vs. novel) and its use in argumentation play a constraining role in both the nature of cognitive processing and the persuasiveness of the argument. Specifically, novel metaphors are more likely to make the fallacy go through unnoticed compared to lexicalised ones. In so doing, Ervas, Gola and Rossi show how argumentation can be thought of as a bridge between reasoning and metaphor: as a discursive process, argumentation is shown to gather the conditions under which metaphorical wordings can influence the quality of reasoning (taken here as the evaluation of a justificatory relationship between premises and conclusions).

Chapter 8, by Louis de Saussure, examines the cognitive and inferential underpinnings of the straw man fallacy, traditionally defined as a refutational fallacy of misattribution. Saussure unpacks the workings of this fallacious move by reflecting on the inferential work it triggers in its addressees and shows that these inferences typically target considerations on the *ethos* of both the victim of the straw man (depicted as a poor inferencer) and the author of the straw man (who, following her alleged exposition of the victim's inferential weakness, arguably sees her prestige enhanced). Successful straw men are thus described as *pragmatic winners* by virtue of the fact that they trigger inferences which are relevant in

face-work processes. From an operational perspective, Saussure provides an account based on considerations of relevance which explains why the defensive meta-discussion typically called for by the straw man fallacy is likely to drown its victim: the burden of proof becomes too heavy to bear because it would require the victim to provide justifications for the intended original interpretation—and this is a meta-discussion which, with regard to conversational purposes, usually turns out to be irrelevant.

In Chap. 9, Fabrizio Macagno and Sarah Bigi consider the role of different presumptions in cases of pragmatic ambiguity and elaborate an account of misunderstanding which draws on general pragmatic principles and argumentative conceptions of inference. Crucially, the theoretical claim of argumentative significance defended in this chapter highlights the usefulness of the tools argumentation theory can offer when dealing with such pragmatic issues: in a nutshell, the idea is that argumentation theory can help when pragmatic ambiguity requires us to decide which interpretation of a given stimulus, among competing interpretations, is more likely. Macagno and Bigi's typologies of ambiguities and presumptions provide a descriptive framework in which the locus of ambiguity can be precisely characterised. In turn, the model they present incorporates contextual constraints (in the form of dialogue types and communicative purposes), the consideration of which contributes to the identification of the reason behind the misunderstanding. The authors apply the model to a corpus of doctor-patient interactions and convincingly show how their framework can contribute to understanding why misunderstandings occur (basically through a mismatch of presumptions made on both parts), and, thus, to making medical practices better.

Chapter 10, by Marcin Lewiński, tackles the issue of practical argumentation in deliberative discourse and examines, in the wake of the pragma-dialectical studies on argumentative indicators (see Sect. 1.2.2 above), the typical linguistic markers that signal this particular type of argumentation scheme. His motivated and very detailed typology of practical argumentation instances, which is based on three different principles for rationally selecting means of reaching the desired goal (i.e., either the best, the necessary or the good enough means), allows him to identify corresponding ranges of expressions which should be mutually exclusive. In the process, Lewiński identifies relevant grammatical categories (superlative and comparative adjectives and adverbs, qualifiers of different psychological valence, and semantic modalities). The relationship between linguistic resources and argumentation is therefore descriptively explored in this contribution and yields novel typological sets which follow from the author's original extension of the argumentative scheme for practical argumentation.

Dima Mohammed, in Chap. 11, contributes to the discussion on the link between linguistic indicators of argumentation and particular argumentative practices by considering the case of European Parliamentary Debates on Statements. After accounting for the specificity of this particular activity type, in which accountability is performed without this being the main point of the activity, Mohammed sets out to examine whether there are typical linguistic indicators that could guide the analysis of such activity type. Her findings indicate that the nature

of the activity type is too complex to result in a systematic catalogue of argumentative indicators of accountability in those discourses: on the one hand, the activity type is highly institutionalised, and on the other, its communicative purpose is too unspecific (here meaning multifarious) to hope to linguistically trace the linguistic occurrence of argumentatively relevant accountability moves. This is thus an example of discourse which points to the inherent difficulties that researchers face when they navigate at the linguistics-argumentation interface, and reminds us that the analysis of argumentative practices should feed on several dimensions of linguistic analysis, the crucial notion of context being one of them (see Sect. 1.3 above).

Chapter 12, by Vera Mundwiler and Judith Kreuz, concludes our volume with a contribution devoted to the types of argumentative practices found in classroom interaction (grades 2, 4 and 6). Drawing on conversational analytic methodologies, the authors analyse recorded data in which argumentative discourse was elicited to observe whether and how primary school children engage in argumentation. Three major findings can be reported here: (i) interestingly, argumentation does not seem to be the only resource children draw on to reach agreement; (ii) moreover, argumentation does not seem to be exclusively used to resolve differences of opinion, but in addition it is also used to explore ideas when agreement has already been reached, thus echoing ideas found elsewhere on the non-necessarily dissenting nature of argumentation (see e.g. Doury 2012); (iii) finally, the range of argumentative strategies at the pupils' disposal seems to increase with age.

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